

Message Text

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ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 DOE-15 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10
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TO AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY
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AMCONSUL BRISBANE
:SECSTATE WASHDC 3262
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS CANBERRA 3694

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR, AS
SUBJECT: GROUND SATELLITE TERMINAL AT NORTH WEST CAPE

1. IN CONNECTION WITH PRESS STORIES ABOUT SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AT NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION HAROLD E. HOLT AT NORTH WEST CAPE, IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE OF USE TO YOU.

2. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE JOINT NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT NORTH WEST CAPE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA. IN 1973, DUE TO PRESSING NEEDS ELSEWHERE, THE AN/TSC-54 EQUIPMENT THEN IN USE WAS REMOVED AND TRANSFERRED, AND COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AT CARNARVON, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, WERE UTILIZED INSTEAD. THIS METHOD OF COMMUNICATION IS STILL IN USE. IN JULY 1977, ANOTHER AN/TSC-54 UNIT BECAME AVAILABLE AND WAS BROUGHT TO HAROLD E. HOLT AS AN ALTERNATE SOURCE FOR
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PAGE 02 CANBER 03694 130401Z

COMMUNICATIONS IN CASE THE CARNARVON NETWORK BECAME DEGRADED. IN FY 1977, THE US DEFENSE COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY, IN CONCERT WITH THE US NAVY, SOUGHT CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR A NEW SYSTEM. HOWEVER, FUNDING FOR INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM (WHICH WOULD REPLACE AN/TSC-54 UNITS IN WORLDWIDE US DEFENSE INSTALLATIONS), HAS BEEN DEFERRED BY THE US CONGRESS UNTIL FY 1980. IN THE SAME MANNER

THAT THE AN/TSC-54 SYSTEM IMPROVED THE RELIABILITY, SPEED, AND ACCURACY OF PREVIOUS SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, THE NEW MSC-61 SYSTEM WILL FURTHER ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES. SPECIFICALLY, THE MSC-61 ADDS NO NEW FUNCTIONS OR ACTIVITIES TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT NORTH WEST CAPE, BUT RATHER, IS A QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING LONG HAUL POINT-TO-POINT COMMUNICATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND TRANSMITTED AT NORTH WEST CAPE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR THIS SYSTEM HAS NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED, AND DEFENSE REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON PLAN TO MEET AGAIN WITH CONGRESS IN JULY OR AUGUST 1978 TO RE-ADDRESS THE ISSUE.

3. AS A MATTER OF INTEREST, AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE MINISTER KILLEN, ASKED ABOUT THE GROUND SATELLITE TERMINAL IN PARLIAMENT ON MAY 11, 1978, GAVE THE FOLLOWING REPLY:
MR. KILLEN: M"MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE POSITION IS AS FOLLOWS: IN 1973, A SATELLITE TERMINAL AT THE STATION (NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION HAROLD E. HOLT) WAS REMOVED. PURSUANT TO APPROVAL GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN OCTOBER 1977, IT WAS REPLACED. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED INFORMALLY -- I EMPHASIZE 'INFORMALLY' -- THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT STANDS IN CONTEMPLATION OF PLACING BEFORE THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT A PROPOSAL TO UPDATE THAT SATELLITE TERMINAL. THAT PROPOSAL RELATES THE THE PERIOD 1980 TO 1981. I ASSURE THE HONORABLE
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PAGE 03 CANBER 03694 130401Z

GENTLEMAN AND THE HOUSE THAT WHEN A FORMAL PROPOSAL HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IT WILL BE CONSIDERED ON ITS MERITS."
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